

extended

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The magazine of the OS/2 community

attributes

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OS/2 WARRIOR

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Honey, I shrunk the magazine

by Bill Schindler, Editor-in-Chief

I knew exactly when the January issue began arriving. I received email after email asking, "Is the magazine smaller?" It became a repeated background theme at the January general meeting.

So, is the magazine smaller? Yes and no.

We reduced the physical dimensions of the magazine by about ten percent. The content, however, remains almost exactly the same.

There are two reasons for reducing the physical size of the magazine. We wanted to be able bleed images and we wanted to reduce the mailing weight.

My magazine is bleeding!

After explaining why the magazine is smaller, almost everyone responded with one more question. What's a bleed?

"Bleed – A photograph, rule, or other graphic element that extends to the edge of a page." (*Newsletters from the Desktop* by Roger C. Parker) In other words, there's no white margin between the graphic and the edge of the page.

The reason we couldn't create bleeds before has to do with the mechanics of printing. The magazine is printed on 11x17 inch paper. The printer needs to grip the paper in order to feed it through the printing plates. It can't grip where the ink is, since the ink is wet. So, about a quarter inch along the edge of the paper cannot be printed on.

In order to bleed an image, you design your page to be completely inside the printable area. (The magazine is still printed on the same 11x17 inch paper.) After the magazine is printed, the print shop trims the paper to the smaller page size. Trimming removes the white margins and creates the bleed.

extended attributes on a diet

Reducing the weight of the magazine is mostly aimed at saving on postage. Since we pay international postage by the half (and sometimes the quarter) ounce, trimming ten percent off the weight can add up some months.

Another advantage is that we can eventually increase the page count by an additional eight pages without incurring extra costs in the USA portion of the mailing. This is not a promise that we will add more pages — that depends on advertising (to support the printing expense) and getting enough articles to fill the space. (If you'd like to help with content, artwork, or advertising, send me an email!)

Thanks

I'd like to thank "Cyberspittle" for providing the cover art this month. Check out his OS/2 Web page at www.geocities.com/cyberspittle. ☺

Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

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Building a perfect CD—each time, every time

by Kim Cheung

info
Creating a CD used to be a very frustrating endeavor for me. I invested heavily for the best quality CD-ROM burning hardware and software, and bought the best CD media. Still, making a perfect CD was a hit-or-miss event, and it was heart breaking to keep throwing my hard-earned cash into the trash can.

The problem became critical with the release of my company's product, WiseManager, where I had to make lots of distribution CDs—but not enough to outsource the task. The word "nightmare" began to take on a new meaning—until I ran into Rollin White, of Sundial Systems and the Southern California OS/2 User Group (SCOUG), who did a number of controlled experiments and came up with some tips for using RSJ, the popular application for writing CD-ROMs (www.rsj.de). I'm sure Rollin has no objection for me to share those tips with you—along with some of my personal additions.

Use a large RSJ cache

Examine your CONFIG.SYS file, paying attention to the lines related to where RSJ is installed. You should see a line that reads:

```
RUN=?:\rsj\CDWFS.D.EXE -p "X:/" -cDDDD -bMMMM -t2 -i3 -s2
```

To understand what's going on, let's examine what this line says.

- m?: is the drive letter where RSJ is installed.
- DDDD is the amount of disk cache for RSJ to use.
- MMMM is the amount of memory cache that RSJ will use.
- X is the drive letter for RSJ's disk cache file.

You need to set DDDD to a large number. Rollin suggested at least 200M (more than 200000). I use 640000—the full size of the CD.

I haven't played with the MMMM parameter a lot, but I set it to the maximum allowed value of 10240 (10M) anyway.

Don't disturb RSJ

Compact discs are like tape, in that the data is stored in one single track—unlike a floppy or hard disk, where it's laid in concentric circles. However, unlike tape, once the write or burning process commences, it must not be disturbed—that's why RSJ works best with large cache. I have not researched the technical details, but I've learned from experience. Many of the CDs I ruined resulted when I got impatient with the process.

For instance, during that last phase, RSJ displays a message "Finalizing CD...", which can sometimes take over 10

minutes. Don't start clicking around, or "push" your machine, or run programs that are prompt to lock up the shell. If the shell is locked (thanks to SIQ) and if you reboot the machine before the CD has been ejected... well, throw another CD into the trash can!

By the same token, you should not "push" your hard drive too much while the burning process is in progress, particularly if you have IDE drives. From the feel of things, I think RSJ takes full advantage of OS/2's multi-threading capability. However, IDE controllers are typically single channelled. If you start pushing your hard drive into performing many operations—i.e., you decide to launch an application or do a file-copy operation, the hard disk driver is going to have to multitask, which is not a very good idea when you're in the middle of burning a CD. I make the RSJ disk cache file use an entire drive. In fact, if you're serious about this, you would want to do create your CD-ROMs on a dedicated machine, or store the data to be copied to CD onto a RAM disk.

Don't use that blue stuff

Maybe this is what psychiatrists call "superstitious conditioning" but I have had bad luck with the cheaper brand of CDs. You'll know which they are; they're blue, instead of the more comforting gold color. They seem to require "tighter" handling.

[Editor's note: Your mileage may vary. One EA editor has had absolutely no trouble with the green/blue discs. He's created hundreds of them with an IDE-based Mitsumi CD-R, over the past two years, and has only ruined two blanks.]

Don't use IDE CD/R drives

I know that the price is hard to resist. But just like I wouldn't use cheap tape drives, I can not honestly recommend using IDE drives for burning CDs—do yourself a favor, stick to SCSI. (Please don't ask me which brand to buy.)

Next month, I will share with you a very nice utility program I wrote to make my life much easier for creating CDs. ☺

Kim Cheung is marketing director of TouchVoice Corp., www.touchvoicecorp.com, and executive director of Serenity Systems International, www.serenity-systems.com.

Sleeping with the enemy

by Esther Schindler

I suppose it's a natural tendency for us OS/2 users to wish we could change the past. Give us just a day with Gerstner's powers... oh, maybe back in the early 90s... and what couldn't we do!

In discussions about "what they could have done," one issue that comes up often is how little IBM promoted OS/2 and—with even more vehemence and vitriol—the degree to which IBM made concessions to Microsoft. In the perceptions of these users, IBM made deals with the devil and committed treasonous acts.

Perhaps they did. Perhaps not. I've had stories whispered to me by insiders that indicate that people and situations were manipulated, but few (actually, none) suggest evidence of "selling out."

I find myself contemplating the whole notion of companies making concessions to—and alliances with—their competitors. That's because I'm writing this on the plane ride home from Lotusphere, where Lotus Development announced (among other topics) that the Notes client will soon support integration with Microsoft Outlook. Has Lotus, too, climbed in bed with the enemy?

Viewpoints

There's more than one way to look at such situations. I'll describe the scandalous viewpoint first, because it's somewhat more emotional—and thus you're more likely to continue reading.

In the National Enquirer school of thought, the decision makers (back then, at IBM; now, at Lotus) fell prey to Microsoft's machinations because of a failure of ethics. Perhaps they were bought off. Maybe they were blackmailed. It's even possible that they were "working for Microsoft all along." And so on.

These excesses are patently unlikely, except in the opinions of the most vicious OS/2 supporters. I find these theories annoying because they oversimplify, they misdirect, and they're so personally offensive. Such accusations make me think of the email I receive every so often (usually after I've publicly embarrassed IBM). They write, "How much did Microsoft pay you to say that?" You fool, I think. If it were true, do you think I'd tell you? And if it's false, do you imagine that such a question is the best way to open a dialog?

More upsetting than the attack is the misdirection. Trying to address the wrong problem never solves the issue. That's like trying to "fix" the motherboard when the problem is with the power supply; you're apt to make the prob-

lem worse in your fiddling around, and in any case you'll never address the real cause.

A more common suspicion is that Microsoft applied business pressure of some kind, and IBM caved in. In this scenario, Microsoft tells IBM, "Give up OS/2 or else..." and IBM relegates OS/2 marketing to the realm of selling a sizzling steak by describing it as old dead cow parts. Or Microsoft approaches a major software developer and says, "If you come out with an OS/2 version, you'll never get technical assistance from Microsoft again."

This scenario has more merit, especially if you examine the testimony from the Microsoft/US Dept. of Justice trial given by IBM's John Soyring. (Soyring is now in charge of OS/2, as of the beginning of 2000. My article about the IBM software organization's restructuring is at www.zdnet.com/sr/stories/news/0,4538,2414315,00.html.) Plus, I've heard whispers, of varying credibility, indicating that Microsoft did indeed attempt to strong-arm vendors—especially vendors who could have helped OS/2 with their support at a critical time.

Many arguers stop at that point, however, because their intent is to prove Microsoft a villain or to absolve IBM of any responsibility for OS/2's fate. (For instance, the implication is that, without Microsoft joggling its elbow, IBM's OS/2 marketing, particular to end users, would be notably effective. IBM? Marketing to end users? History demonstrates otherwise.) If Microsoft cheated, these people argue, then OS/2 couldn't have achieved the success it deserves. But I think that there are other factors which a fair observer needs to take into account.

Home runs

First among these factors is IBM's (or Lotus') complicity in the process of "giving in." The OS/2 business is undeniably relevant to a segment of the IBM customer base that it needs to keep happy: those large corporate customers. (When someone places orders for 300,000 copies of anything, you'll go out of your way to scrape up a copy of Pong if it looks like that'd close the deal.) But OS/2 isn't a big part of IBM's business; it never has been. It's one drop in a very large bucket.

Plus, within IBM, OS/2 is considered a failed product. The OS/2 technical staff believe in it as much as you and I do—they've bet their careers on it—but the higher-up decision makers see things differently. IBM is committed to supporting OS/2 (though finding a copy of Pong would be a cheaper way to satisfy customers) but it has never delivered on its financial goals.

Sure, OS/2 is doing better than the current sales budget planned... but that's a far cry from what was originally expected. Remember, OS/2 has been around for more than ten years. As one ex-IBM executive told me, a few years ago, "We've promised Management for years that we're going to hit the next one out of the ball park. Yet, we've consistently struck out. Why should they believe us when we promise a home run *this time*?"

If part of the reason that you can't manage home runs is that the other team is cheating... well, it makes it look like this isn't a very good game to play in.

So, when and if a competitor asks you to make concessions before you can make a separate alliance, it's not too tough to imagine that the sacrifice won't be very painful. It's like negotiating with someone for the best price on a used car. If he says, "I'll give you \$100 off if you give me your old 286 computer," are you selling out? If the computer is stored in your garage and rarely used? Or even if your daughter used the 286 system occasionally?

I'm not saying this has happened. Nor am I saying that it's morally right. However, I can certainly understand how the non-emotionally-involved would view such a situation.

In contrast, compare the enthusiasm with which IBM is adopting Linux, and the degree to which it's embraced Java. The more cynical among us (including me) snort that the only reason they're behind those technologies is the credibility they earn by coming from outside IBM, but I'm not sure that's the point.

But even that ballpark analogy isn't a compelling reason for making deals with Microsoft. There's a better one—and it just might be the right thing for a company to do.

What's right for customers?

Lotus' lame-duck president, Jeff Papows, made the announcement about Notes'

integration during his keynote speech at Lotusphere. The crowd cheered and applauded. Note that well: the crowd cheered.

I seriously doubt that the attendees (nearly all corporate customers, with a smattering of business partners) had all sold out to Microsoft. Rather, they were IS staff whose organizations rely on both Notes and Outlook, frustrated with efforts to incorporate business processes between the two products.

The point is: customers want convenience. They aren't interested in what's good for their vendors; they want features and integration that benefit their own company's use of computers. They want products and services to work together. If

necessary, the computer users think, vendors should work together to provide customers with better service. To accomplish that, vendors must form alliances—even if they hate each other personally and professionally.

What matters is the customers' convenience and the customers' benefit. It's why Continental shares routes and frequent flier programs with America West. As a flying customer, I have a greater selection of flight times. And it's just as true for Lotus supporting a competitor's email client as it is for IBM working with Microsoft to optimize Windows NT on IBM's hardware. ☺

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More trouble: fixing OS/2 problems

by David Both

two warped

When you attempt to resolve OS/2 problems, there are a couple things you should do first.

Ensure that the latest version of OS/2, and the latest FixPack (CSD level) is installed. In my opinion, using the latest version and CSD level ensures that you have all of the latest fixes to the operating system before you invest a great deal of time in problem determination.

Once you determine that the OS/2 system is running at a supported CSD or FixPack level, you can begin the problem determination phase.

When an error occurs, gather as much information as possible about it. Record as much information as is applicable to the problem before you attempt a fix.

Error messages

If more than one error occurs, record the information for each error. The SYS3175 error window is one of several which might be displayed when an application has a problem.

Errors occurring in text mode command line sessions display messages like this:
SYS0021: The drive is not ready.

You can look at the register information if the error panel has a "Display Register Information" button. In general only the program name and the type of error are useful from this display.

It also helps to compile hardware and software configuration information. Here's a checklist to get you started.

- CPU type and speed.
- Adapters installed.
- IRQ and I/O address information. (Use RMVIEW.)
- Total memory (RAM) installed.
- Hard drive size and partitioning.
- LAN. What is the LAN configuration? Number of machines on LAN?
- Type of LAN. Ethernet or Token Ring?
- The LAN software: Warp Server, Novell Netware, etc.
- Network protocols installed on the affected systems.
- Software. What is the software configuration?
- CSD level.
- Version level. Use the VER /L command. Since some Warp Fixpaks do not alter the CSD level, only the internal revision level can tell you which fixpak is installed.

Other questions to ask yourself are:

- Can the problem be reproduced consistently? Describe the steps exactly.
- What was the sequence of events prior to the error?
- What was happening at the time of the error?

- What other programs were running at the time the error occurred?
- Have there been any recent changes? Was any software installed recently? Has memory or an adapter been added to the machine?
- Is this a new installation?
- Is there any other relevant information? Sometimes information that does not appear to be relevant now may be the key to solving the problem.

Tools

It is important to know how to obtain information about OS/2 and the computer system itself. Some tools, packaged with OS/2, can assist you in gathering information.

Many problems and their solutions are specific to a version of OS/2. Knowing which version you are working with can be an important step towards resolution. The VER command provides one way to obtain some of this information. The command VER issued at an OS/2 command prompt displays the information shown here:

```
[C:\]ver
```

```
The Operating System/2 Version is 2.10
```

This basic VER command provides only minimal information. The /R switch provides additional information, in the form of the internal revision level. When you use the /R switch, you must be in a DOS session for OS/2 versions 2.00 through 2.10. OS/2 version 2.11 and Warp provide this switch from the OS/2 command line as well.

```
[C:\]ver /r
```

```
The Operating System/2 Version is 3.00  
Revision 8.246
```

If you use the /R switch with a version of OS/2 earlier than 2.11, it displays an invalid syntax error message. This switch was undocumented in earlier versions of OS/2, but is now documented in OS/2 Warp 4 and OS/2 Warp Server.

The revision level indicates which FixPack is installed. Each FixPack has a unique version level which can be used for this purpose.

The SYSLEVEL command displays detailed information about the fix levels of OS/2. It provides information about the components of OS/2, such as the graphics subsystem, the base operating system, LAN, Database Manager (DB2/2), and other components installed. SYSLEVEL also provides a direct display of the current and previous CSD level installed on the system for many, but not all, versions of OS/2. You may want to redirect its output to a file or printer.

The PSTAT Command

When asked what programs were running when a problem occurred, many users will say "Nothing," which is never true in a multitasking operating system. PSTAT lets you see what is actually running, to help you figure out what's happening. PSTAT shows all the processes and threads which are running in the system.

The PSTAT program, which you run from an OS/2 command line, is in all versions of OS/2. It displays process status information, such as the current processes running. Plus it lists all the threads running under each of those processes, system semaphores, dynamic-link libraries, and shared memory. PSTAT can display the current status and

priority of each process and thread in the system.

To start PSTAT, open an OS/2 window and type one of the following commands.

- PSTAT /C: Display the current process and thread related information
- PSTAT /S: Display the system semaphores information for each thread
- PSTAT /L: Display the Dynamic Link Libraries (DLL) in use for each process
- PSTAT /M: Display the shared memory information for each thread
- PSTAT /P:id: Display information related to the ID of the specified process

You can also enter the PSTAT command without a parameter to display information about the following:

- Current processes and threads

- System semaphores
- Shared memory for each process
- Dynamic-link libraries

PSTAT has one drawback: it cannot show kernel level processes, such as device drivers. It will show everything else, which is usually quite a lot.

Until next time...

Next month, I will continue this discussion of troubleshooting tools. By the way, I have a chapter on troubleshooting in my online "DataBook for OS/2 Warp." You can check out the book and order it from my Web site at www.millennium-technology.com. ☺

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Syslevel lite

by Bill Schindler

Whenever you want to find out what fixpack level your OS/2 system is at, you run the syslevel command. Syslevel searches every drive on your system for files with names that start with "syslevel." It then displays the information from each file. Syslevel is fine if you want to check everything on your system. But if you want to check one component, syslevel is annoyingly slow.

While I was waiting on SYSLEVEL one day, I wrote a simple Object Rexx program to examine a single syslevel file.

Processing a syslevel file in Rexx is an interesting endeavour. The biggest problem is that syslevel files are binary—rather than text—files. Since it's binary, you have to treat the contents of a syslevel file as a single large string. Binary numeric information must be converted in order to display the information in a human readable format.

Here's an example of running the Object Rexx program, named syslvl.cmd, with the SYSLEVEL.OS2 file as input:

```
[OS/2]syslvl C:\OS2\INSTALL\SYSLEVEL.OS2
Warp Server for e-business Base Operating System
Version 4.50
CSD level XR04500; Prior CSD level XR04500
```

The "CSD level" is the fixpack level. IBM used to call fixpacks "corrective service" so CSD is somewhat of an anachronism. Feel free to change the message text if you prefer "fixpack."

Parsing the syslevel file

Most of the work of parsing the syslevel file is done in a subroutine named ParseSyslevel. (See the listing for ParseSyslevel.rxx.) The ParseSyslevel routine is in a separate file because I want to be able to easily use it in other Object Rexx programs.

Let's take a look at how ParseSyslevel works.

```
::routine ParseSyslevel PUBLIC
```

The ::routine directive tells Rexx that ParseSyslevel is a subroutine. The PUBLIC attribute makes the routine visible to any Object Rexx program referencing ParseSyslevel.rxx with the ::requires directive.

```
USE ARG filename
```

The USE ARG statement gets the arguments that were passed to the routine when it was called.

```
f = .stream-new(filename)
f-open('Read')
data = f-charin(1, f-chars)
f-close
```

This set of statements creates a new file stream object (.stream-new), and opens the file. The entire file is read as a single string by using the charin method. (The chars method returns the length of the file.) The file is then closed.

```
res = .directory-new
```

The routine will return its results in a directory object. A directory acts like an array, except that the subscript can be any type of object, not just a number.

```
res['VER.MAJOR'] = data-substr(41, 1)-c2x
res['VER.MINOR'] = data-substr(42, 1)-c2x
res['VERSION'] = ((res-ver.major / 10) + ,
                  (res-ver.minor / 100))-format(,2)
```

These statements calculate the version number of the product. The number is stored as a binary value in two bytes. The version is intended to be used as a hexadecimal (base 16) value rather than a decimal value. The code translates the byte to hexadecimal using the c2x (character to hex) method.

The major and minor parts of the version number are stored in the result directory. Notice how strings are used as subscripts with the directory.

The full version number is then calculated and formatted. The res-ver.major is an alternate way of accessing a value in a directory. You could also use res['VER.MAJOR'] and get the same result. Using the twiddle (the "~" is called "twiddle") syntax is easier to type and usually easier to read.

```
PARSE VALUE data-substr(45,15) WITH csd 8 9 priorcsd
PARSE VALUE data-substr(61) WITH name '00'x .
```

Here, the PARSE instruction is used to break out the current and prior fixpack (CSD) levels. These values have a fixed length, so the easy way is to use positioning values with the PARSE.

Retrieving the product name is a little trickier. We don't know how long the name is, so we cannot use positioning. The name is stored in a C language string format which ends with a binary zero. So, we have to tell PARSE to look for the binary zero ('00'x) and cut the string at that point.

```
res['CSD'] = csd
res['PRIORCSD'] = priorcsd
res['NAME'] = name
```

These statements store the results from the PARSE instructions into the directory.

```
RETURN res
```

Finally, we return the directory to the caller.

Using the routine

You have to do two things in order to use the ParseSyslevel routine in an Object Rexx program. First, you have to tell Object Rexx that your program uses the routine. Second, you have to call the routine.

You tell Object Rexx that your program is using code in an external file by using the `::requires` directive. If you saved the routine in a file named "ParseSyslevel.rxx" then you'd use the directive like this:

```
::requires "ParseSyslevel.rxx"
```

Note that a long filename like this will only work if you're using an HPFS or JFS formatted hard drive. If you're using a FAT formatted drive, you'll need to save the routine with a short filename and use that filename with the `::requires` directive. The filename does not have to match the name of the routine.

You call the routine the same way you'd call it if the routine was local to your program. For example:

```
sys = ParseSyslevel(syslevel)
```

The result of calling ParseSyslevel is a directory. You access the contents of the directory in the same way that we did above.

In the syslvl.cmd program, the values are written to standard output. The code does one thing that may need some explanation:

```
.output ,  
  --lineout(sys-name) ,  
  --lineout('Version' sys-version) ,  
  --lineout('CSD level' sys-csd;' ,  
           'Prior CSD level' sys-priorcsd)
```

Notice the double twiddles. When you use a single twiddle, the result returned is the result of the message (i.e. method call). In this case, we don't want the result of the

lineout method. What we really want to do is keep sending more messages to the .output object. A double twiddle returns the original object instead of the message's return value, so we can use a series of lineout methods instead of doing this:

```
.output-lineout(sys-name)  
.output-lineout('Version' sys-version)
```

Finally

You should now have a little more knowledge about Object Rexx and have a useful utility as a result.

For more information on Object Rexx, be sure to read the online information. Also, check out Aviar's Object Rexx book (see the ad on page 7) and the IBM Object Rexx Redbooks on IBM's Web site. ☺

Listing 1. The syslvl.cmd program

```
/*  
 * SysLvl - A program to return the current fix level from  
 * a SYSLEVEL file.  
 *  
 * Author: Bill Schindler  
 * Created: 20 August 1999  
 */  
  
PARSE ARG syslevel  
  
IF syslevel = '' THEN  
DO  
  .output ,  
    --lineout("Usage:"),  
    --lineout(" syslvl <syslevel.xxx>")  
  EXIT  
END  
  
sys = ParseSyslevel(syslevel)  
  
.output ,  
  --lineout(sys-name) ,  
  --lineout('Version' sys-version) ,  
  --lineout('CSD level' sys-csd;' ,  
           'Prior CSD level' sys-priorcsd)  
  
EXIT  
  
::requires "ParseSyslevel.rxx"
```

Listing 2. The ParseSyslevel routine

```
/*  
 * Version major @ offset 0x0028  
 * minor @ offset 0x0029  
 * CSD @ offset 0x002C  
 * Name @ offset following CSD to first '\0'  
 */  
  
::routine ParseSyslevel PUBLIC  
  USE ARG filename  
  f = .stream-new(filename)  
  f-open('Read')  
  data = f-charin(1, f-chars)  
  f-close  
  
  res = .directory-new  
  
  res['VER.MAJOR'] = data-substr(41, 1)-c2x  
  res['VER.MINOR'] = data-substr(42, 1)-c2x  
  res['VERSION'] = ((res-ver.major / 10) + ,  
                  (res-ver.minor / 100))-format(,2)  
  
  PARSE VALUE data-substr(45,15) WITH csd 8 9 priorcsd  
  PARSE VALUE data-substr(61) WITH name '00'x  
  
  res['CSD'] = csd  
  res['PRIORCSD'] = priorcsd  
  res['NAME'] = name  
  
RETURN res
```

WarpTech registration

Sign up now to get the "early bird" discount rates

The Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc is creating a special three-day technical event for OS/2 Warp users, developers, and vendors. The event will be held at the world-renowned Wigwam Resort in Litchfield Park, Arizona, USA (near Phoenix) over Memorial Day weekend.

Technical sessions are planned to cover the gamut from home to corporate users and from novices to software developers. Among the sessions you can expect:

- Software development
- The Internet and e-business with OS/2
- The guts of OS/2

- Connectivity and cross-platform issues
- The OS/2 marketplace
- Tips and tricks

And more!

If you're an OS/2 user, developer, or vendor, this is an event you do not want to miss! To sign up, cut out or copy the form below, fill it in, and mail it to the Phoenix OS/2 Society with your check or credit card information.

The Wigwam Resort is offering a discount room rate of \$99/night for WarpTech attendees. To reserve your room at this rate, call 800-327-0396 and mention WarpTech. ☺

WARP Tech

WarpTech Memorial Day May 26-28, 2000 Registration Wigwam Resort | Phoenix, AZ

Today's date

Name [Last, First I. (Nickname)]

Address 1

Address 2

City

State/province

Zip code/postal code

Country

Phone

Email

Please use one form per registrant

Rates for full three days (includes lunches)

Until 31 December 1999: \$110.00 POSSI member \$120.00 nonmember

1 January to 30 April 2000: \$120.00 POSSI member \$130.00 nonmember

1 May 2000 to event: \$130.00 POSSI member \$140.00 nonmember

Daily rates (includes lunches) Friday Saturday Sunday

Until 31 December 1999: \$59.00 one day \$79.00 two days

1 January to 30 April 2000: \$69.00 one day \$89.00 two days

1 May 2000 to event: \$79.00 one day \$99.00 two days

Lunch only (\$25.00) Friday Saturday Sunday

Member #

I am a member of the Phoenix OS/2 Society

I wish to join the Phoenix OS/2 Society now and take advantage of the member discount (enclose a completed membership application)

I need vegetarian meals

Do not send me WarpTech announcements via email

I am interested in information about evening activities and excursions around Phoenix

Please contact me about exhibiting at WarpTech

Please contact me about volunteering to help at WarpTech

Please contact me about advertising

Check enclosed for \$ _____
Make payable to Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc

OR Charge my VISA Mastercard Discover American Express

Expiration date ____/____/____

Card # _____

Signature: _____

Refund Policy
Refund shall be the paid registration amount less \$10 until March 1, 2000. Thereafter, an additional \$25 per registered day shall be non-refundable.

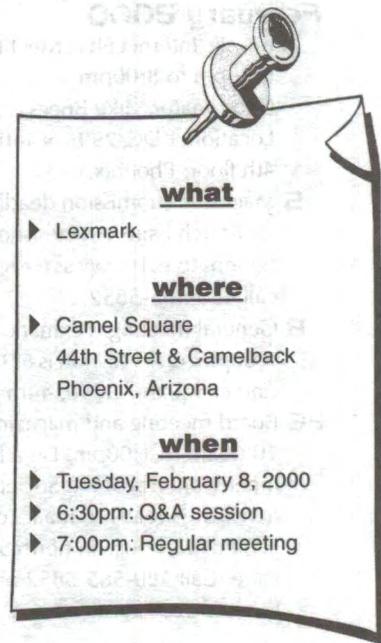
Phoenix OS/2 Society, Inc ■ 5515 N 7th St, PMB 5-133 ■ Phoenix, AZ 85014-2531 ■ USA

Oh. Right. Lexmark's *this* month

by Esther Schindler

A few months ago I wrote an article talking about the upcoming general meeting with Lexmark. Go back to that issue, cut out the promotional article, and plug it in here. Through an embarrassing error of communication judgement on the part of Yours Truly, that meeting didn't happen (at least not with Lexmark). But it's rescheduled—in ink—for the February general meeting.

On Tuesday, February 8, Lexmark's David Kring will show us the company's latest lineup of printers—most of which have OS/2 drivers in the box. The meeting will be held at our usual time and place—7:00pm at the Camelsquare, at Camelback and 44th Street. ☺



WarpTech 2000—The Year's Must-Attend Event For The OS/2 Community

As an OS/2 user, it's a sure bet that you want to use the operating system and its applications better. That's the purpose of WarpTech: exploring the guts of OS/2 Warp, getting how-to tips, and learning how to exploit the operating system — all within the context of the larger computing community.

WarpTech 2000 will present 40-plus sessions covering the hottest topics in OS/2 networking, programming, business, and software topics. If you use OS/2, you'll use your computer *more effectively* by attending WarpTech this May.

"We've already scheduled more presentation slots than any preceding OS/2 show," says Craig Greenwood, the WarpTech Captain. "We are going to create the biggest OS/2 extravaganza that this world has ever seen."

Check the WarpTech 2000 Web site, already taking shape at: <http://www.warptech.org>

Coming events

A list of events scheduled by the Phoenix OS/2 Society and other OS/2 user groups.

February 2000

I net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for March issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

8 General meeting; Lexmark. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

26 Board meeting and magazine prep. Meeting is 10:00am to 1:00pm. Eat a brunch, learn about the inner workings of the Society, and help get extended attributes ready to mail. Location: Bill and Esther Schindler's house in north Scottsdale, 9355 E Mark Lane. Call 480-585-5852 or send email to esther@bitranch.com for directions.

February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

March 2000

5 Magazine submission deadline for April issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

7 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

14 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

25 Board meeting and magazine prep.

March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April 2000

4 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

11 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

22 Board meeting and magazine prep.

May 2000

2 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

Coordinator Mike Briggs.

Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

9 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

26 WarpTech begins. The WarpTech conference runs May 26-28, 2000 (Memorial Day weekend). For more information, see www.warptech.org and the application form on page 10.

27 Board meeting and magazine prep (at WarpTech).

May

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June 2000

5 Magazine submission deadline for May issue. Articles should be sent to editor@possi.org. For other arrangements, call 480-585-5852.

6 net.sig (Internet SIG). Meeting is 6:00pm to 8:00pm. Coordinator Mike Briggs. Location: KDC, 2999 N 44th St, 4th floor, Phoenix.

13 General meeting. Meeting is 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Q&A session is 6:30pm to 7:00pm. Location: Camel Square, G250, 44th St & Camelback, Phoenix.

24 Board meeting and magazine prep.

June

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Meeting locations

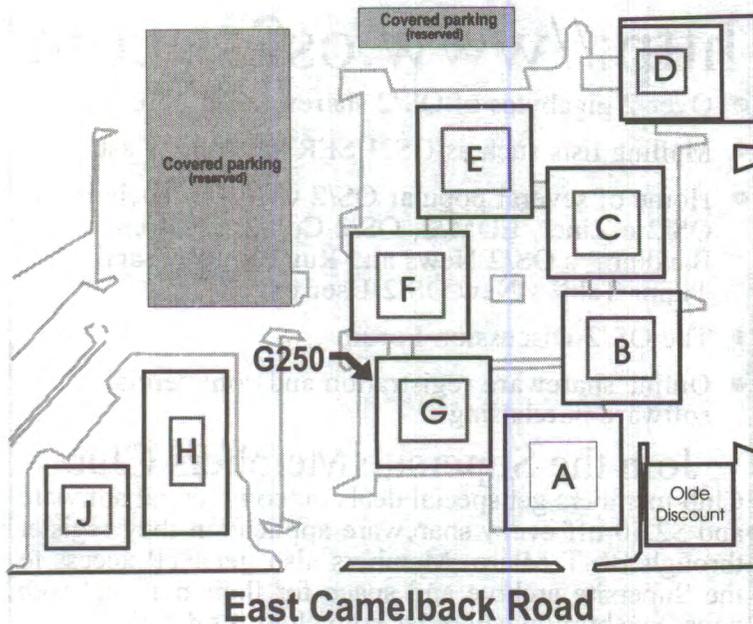
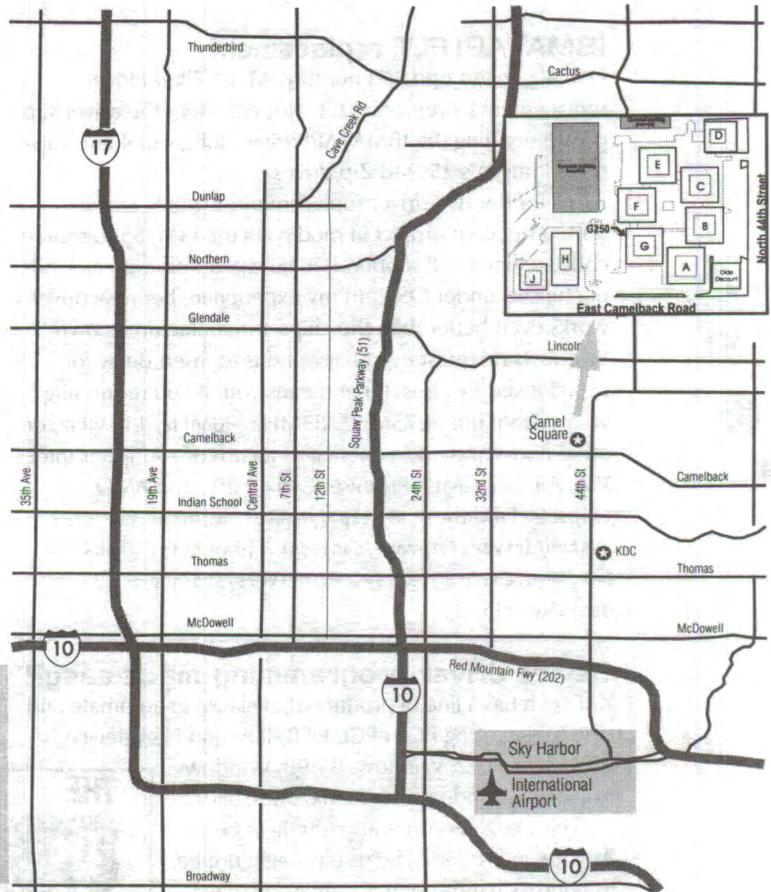
Directions to meeting locations.

General meetings are held at the Camel Square office complex, Room G250, 44th Street and Camelback (northwest corner), Phoenix.

From the Red Mountain Freeway (202), exit at 44th Street and go north $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. From the Squaw Peak (51), exit at Colter (southbound) or Highland (northbound); follow signs to Camelback Rd and go east $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

The "How OS/2 Works General Interest Group" and the Internet SIG (net.sig) meet at Knowledge Development Center, 2999 N 44th St, Suite 400. That's just north of Thomas, in the building with the green dome. Plenty of free parking is available in the garage behind the building. ☺

If the mailing label on the back cover says "sample" then this may be the only copy of extended attributes that you will ever receive. If you want to keep getting the magazine (and receive all the other benefits of membership), you must join! A 12 month membership in the USA is only \$30. (See the form for membership pricing in other areas.) Tear out the applica-



North 44th Street

A map of Camel Square, the new location for the Society's monthly general meeting. We will be meeting in room G250. You may park anywhere except in the reserved (covered) parking spaces.

In the driver seat

New support for your OS/2 hardware

by David Wei, davidwei@cybermail.net

IBMATAPI.FLT replacement

Daniela Engert updated her IBM ATAPI Filter Driver replacement to version 0.2.3. Not only does the driver support everything the IBSMATAPI drives does, but it also supports Iomega's 250MB Zip drives.

As for her IDE driver replacement: Daniela Engert started her own project in modifying the IBM1S506 source code so that it will support IDE busmastering, with all kinds of chipsets under OS/2. In my experience, her new driver works even better than the chipset manufacturer's own Windows driver! It even has options to insert delay for overclocked PCI bus. (That means you, if you're running your system bus at 75MHz, 83MHz, 90MHz, 113MHz, or other non-standard frequencies.) It currently supports Intel, VIA, Ali, SiS, CMD, Promise, Cyrix, HPT, and AMD chipsets. Find these at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/system/drivers/storage/daniadsk.zip> or <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/system/drivers/storage/danis506.zip>.

Device driver programming made easy?

KRFTech has a line of products that claims to automate and simplifies writing PCI, cPCI, USB, ISA, and EISA device drivers for OS/2, Windows 95/98, Windows NT/2000, Windows CE, Linux, and Solaris.

The OS/2 version is apparently in beta. Anyone interested? The results might not be as good as hand-tuned assembly language code, but the more support for OS/2 the better. They're at www.krftech.com.

Generic Win-OS/2 sound Driver

Now Win-OS/2 users can rejoice, because you no longer have to find a sound card that provides OS/2 support as well as Win-OS/2 support. Just get a sound card that works under OS/2, and leave the Win-OS/2 support to the Generic Win-OS/2 Sound Driver.

The generic driver now supports both wave-in and wave-out, plus MIDI support. In the future, this driver may evolve into a Win-OS/2 and DOS sound driver. Find it at <http://home.wxs.nl/~rwklein/index.htm> or www.mensys.nl/rwklein.



IBM printer drivers

IBM has released updated drivers for their Quad bundle of All-In-One printer driver, which includes:

- LaserJet* for HP LaserJet series and compatible printers
- OMNI* for all types of dot matrix printers, including both impact and ink-jet.
- PScript* for all types of Adobe PostScript-compatible printers.
- Plotters* for all types of pen or ink-jet plotters.

For the asterisk (*), substitute letters to indicate different language versions. For example, en is English, tw is Taiwanese, and so on. You'll find these at ftp://ftp.software.ibm.com/ps/product_s/os2/printpak.

IBM updates notebook driver

IBM has released updated drivers for several notebook models: ThinkPad 380, 380D, 380XD, 380Z, 385XD, 560X, 560Z, 600, 600E and the 600X that uses NeoMagic MagicGraph 128V/ZV/XD and MagicMedia 256AV/ZX video chipset. Find the drivers at www.pc.ibm.com/qtechinfo/DSHY-3Y5M7P.html.

THE OS/2 SUPERSITE

<http://www.os2ss.com>

- Over 2 gigabytes of OS/2 shareware and freeware
- Mailing lists such as OS2USER and WarpCast
- Home of several popular OS/2 web sites such as OS/2 e-Zine!, EDM/2, OS/2 Connect, Loren Bandiera's OS/2 News and Rumors Page, and Timur Tabi's New OS/2 User page.
- The OS/2 Discussion Forum
- Online shareware registration and commercial software purchasing

Join the Supersite Members Club

Club members get special deals on commercial software and \$2.50 off every shareware application they register through BMT Micro. Members also get FTP access to the Supersite archive and space for their personal web page. See <http://www.os2ss.com/club/> for details.

COMDEX 1999—an attendee's view

a review by Mike Willmoth

feature

As you may know, each November there is a large computer show in Las Vegas, Nevada, called COMDEX, the COMputer Dealers Expo. The show takes over the Las Vegas Convention Center (LVCC), the Las Vegas Hilton (LVH) next door, and the Sands Expo and Convention Center (SECC), a few miles away.

In 1999, COMDEX was held Monday November 15 through Friday November 19, with Bill Gates' keynote speech on Sunday November 14.

I've attended this incredibly huge event for eight out of the last nine years. Each time I go, I find something interesting. I wander the thousands of square feet of displays, am inundated by the cacophony produced by presenters, and get furious at having to share all these wonderful gadgets with so many other people.

The first five years I attended, I represented the Arizona state government as well as myself. I'd look for hardware and software that my employers might use for the benefit of our public, but I also kept an eye out for things to use at home or in the home office. Now that I'm self-employed, I concentrate on the latter, though my wife also looks for work-related products.

If you can't get to COMDEX, though, you might enjoy hearing about it—especially from the perspective of someone who prefers OS/2.

It's how much for that room?!

COMDEX is so large that the city of Las Vegas feels the impact. In 1999, more than 200,000 folks filled the hotels, function space, casinos, and restaurants. Hotels jack up their prices to triple digits, the airport is stressed into carrying full flights all week, and nary a rental car can be found.

Several years ago, we figured out that this plan wasn't in our budget. So we rent a furnished apartment, and we drive up from Phoenix in our own car. To stay in a fancy hotel for a single night would cost more than we spend on the apartment and car for the entire week.

A typical day at COMDEX starts out with us driving to the LVCC after breakfast. Since this is a city-owned facility, they offer free handicap parking in the rear of the building. (We can use the handicap facilities, instead of the pay parking across the street, because my wife fell off the roof several years ago and hurt her back.)

From the LVCC's handicap parking lot, we enter the main corridor and stay inside until we get close to the LVH, which opens earlier than the LVCC.

The SECC offers paid handicap parking since it's privately owned. Or we can park down the street and walk, or we can park at the LVCC and take a bus supplied by COMDEX. We usually save the SECC for the last two days of the event. If you're new to COMDEX, you'll discover that you have to do a lot of walking!

The incredible shrinking exhibit space

The 1999 COMDEX was different. The 1998 event was larger, with more exhibits, outside pavilions to house the non-critical stuff like registration, vendor private areas, etc.

We didn't see that in 1999. Instead, we saw lots of empty space. Some was used up by convention services, with a food function where we never saw one before. Some had sofas and chairs where we didn't expect any. Registration was in the southwest corner of the LVCC. Ziff-Davis' private area was in the LVH next to the Media Facilities Area. In 1998, that space was filled with exhibits.

We didn't see lots of big names, like IBM or Intel. Oh, IBM had a presence in various vendor booths, such as Microsoft and other partners. But there was no grand pavilion, no booth conglomeration, and certainly no OS/2.

Even the SECC was scaled down. Only the upper floor was used for exhibits, although they expanded next door into the Venetian Hotel. But even the registration area was upstairs, and they had no media facilities. So it's clear that COMDEX is changing. Time will tell where it's going.

One of the first places we started walking was the North Hall. Many of the mid-size vendors exhibit here, while the large-size ones go for the South Hall (such as Microsoft and Toshiba).

Cool products? Sure!

In 1999 I was given media credentials because I was representing extended attributes. While I was walking in, on the first day, a British woman approached me. She spotted my "media" badge and zeroed in on me before I knew what was happening. She asked me to follow her to a booth where she was involved.

Her company, Sixth Sense, offers a couple of products that I haven't had time to review yet. I saw a demo of J-

"I walked for five days straight, getting dizzy every hour or so from the overload of the senses"

Box, which lets you turn your computer into a jukebox. Not only can you use it to play music CDs, but you can also categorize your music and create custom playlists. J-Box, which uses MP3, also lets you take regular uncompressed music, compress it using the MP3 engine in the software, and play it back from your hard disk. They can be found at www.sixthsense.co.uk.

The other product is DataCop PC. The box says it checks for the Y2K virus as well as other Y2K issues. Contact www.gmt-2000.com for more information.

This show's hot topic was Internet appliances. One company had been doing research and development on a Web server on a chip. This goes into a device, such as a

light switch or a toaster, which is connected to the outside world. Now, using your Web browser from work, you can remotely turn on the TV, coffee maker, or jacuzzi! The company was hoping to find a larger company to fund their products to the market.

IBM has recently been advertising wearable computer gear. One company, Xybernaut, showed a headband with a small display on a stick in front of your face, kind of like a dentist's mirror. From the way the small monitor was located, it would have the same angular size as a 17-inch monitor three feet from your eyes. The only thing was, you really could only view it with one eye. The control in your hand simulated a mouse, using a 4-way rocker button. It was

in sad need of adjustment, as I kept swinging by whatever icon I chose to click on and had to work at it just to manipulate the cursor. Keep working, guys.

OS Wars, version 1999

Microsoft had a huge presence, not only in its own booth area, but in almost every device out there. Their participating vendor displays were so numerous and crowded it took me thirty minutes just to browse by them all. On several presentation stages, they showed off Windows 2000 and Office 2000. They even had an area in the back of South Hall where you could pay to get your hands on Windows 2000 in a closed booth area. I spoke with some people at various

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KDC KNOWLEDGE
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presentations who had bags showing they'd gone through some of that. Most felt it was worth their companies' money to expose them to it. Talk about the masses....

BeOS had a presence at the SECC. Their operating system was fast, impressive speed on graphics, but appears to be a niche OS.

Linux had a large presence. In 1998, Linux was relegated to the bottom floor of the SECC—clearly second-class real estate—with a few booths in a few rows. In 1999, they'd taken over half the LVH function space! You even had to scan your badge just to enter the darn thing. Red Hat was there, of course, but so was TurboLinux, Caldera, SuSE, Corel, etc. I had a nice chat with a fellow from Switzerland who worked for TurboLinux. (Did you know that Switzerland has four official languages? French, German, Italian, and Romansch. I never heard of the latter, but it's apparently related most closely to Latin.)

Red Hat was handing out free CD-ROMs of its implementation of Linux. Corel had an impressive presentation: four mouse clicks to install their Linux! They even put an Application button on the lower left of the screen. Sound familiar? I think they're taking a page out of Microsoft for marketing.

FreeBSD was represented by a young lady dressed in a devil costume. I got a lengthy dissertation on how their OS is supported by a core group of programmers who work non-profit so that they can't give the OS away free, etc. So, along with the increased presence, the Linux vendors also got to pay more for the function space at the LVH. I guess they're making money now. At least Microsoft has competition from somewhere.

Lights, cameras, multimedia

Creative Labs had a huge booth at the SECC. They had two stages for presentations plus several kiosks where you could find out about their products. One was Sound Blaster Platinum Live! which they gave away at the end of each related show.

They also had the Nomad II, an MP3 player with firmware capability. The idea is to make it upgradeable if they drop the MP3 standard for a superior one later on.

Creative Labs also had a digital camera, WebCamGo, with VGA resolution and portability. Connect it up to your system like QuickCam or take it with you for a digital camera. The woman giving the presentations was supported by a live band made up of CL employees. They were popular. Especially when you consider that, at the end of each day, they gave away free items. (Fast forward to Friday. The president of CL comes out and authorizes them to give away even more stuff. I think the final tally for the last show was 40 SBPLs, at least one Nomad II, at least one WCG, and one or two 3D Annihilator graphics boards. Some spectators even admitted they had attended the show more than ten times. Hey, she was blonde, suggestive and gave away free hardware. What more could you ask?)

Also in the SECC was WebSpy software, out of Australia. I'd just spent three weeks touring Australia, so I chatted the woman up, but couldn't talk her out of a review copy. WebSpy is a Web site monitoring tool for companies to keep an eye on where users are going. Check out www.webspy.com.au for their Internet management and monitoring tools.

Citibank pushed its citiwallet for e-commerce. You sign up by filling out a demographic survey and enter your credit card information that you intend to use online. Use your citiwallet on Web sites that support it, they say, and never have to re-enter your credit card data again. I recently received a notice from MBNA that they have mbnawallet available for online purchases. I haven't tried either one, yet.

Another company carried extra special serial port cards. Everyone was of Ukrainian or of Ukrainian descent. They even had a parallel port card that came with an OS/2 driver! Whew. I knew I could find a vendor

somewhere which still supported our favorite OS.

Xerox had photocopiers. Toshiba had laptops. Lexmark had printers. A career fair at the back had numerous empty booths and spaces, but it wasn't well advertised. ZDTV had live broadcasts. Kodak had digital cameras.

There was development software, Web creation tools, very little multimedia stuff, lots of training companies, and plenty of accessories. Colored computer cases are everywhere. One place had a mouse on a ring that you wear. Another had a Web site that could centralize all your email, faxmail, etc. I tried to register three times to no avail. But I did see a gizmo which could blow high-tech bubbles from the container within.

Do your feet hurt yet?

COMDEX always has neat stuff. Unfortunately, there're always the dull things, the presentations that you have to live through just to find out what the software does or to get a press kit, and especially the crowds. I couldn't find much for OS/2. I walked for five days straight, getting dizzy every hour or so from the overload of the senses. Since much of the data in the manual you get when you register doesn't really cover some of detail you need, you just have to hit the pavement. It's good exercise. It teaches you patience. It also makes you appreciate your room (or apartment) when you return for a good night's rest. Peace and quiet. Until tomorrow. ☺

Sibyl

Object Pascal for OS/2 programmers

by Aaron Lawrence

It's always been difficult to find good-quality, well-supported OS/2 development tools. Although a large variety of tools were available until a few years ago, many are now unsupported, old fashioned, difficult to use, or based on REXX. And REXX, despite its attraction for some tasks, is not really suitable for developing full-featured applications.

So it's worthwhile to pay attention to some of the OS/2 development tools that remain available. One of the best is Sibyl, a visual development environment for OS/2, Windows 9x/NT4, and coming soon for Linux.

Sibyl, written by a German software company called Speedsoft (www.speedsoft-online.de), was built on top of their previous product, Speed Pascal. Sibyl has been available for about two years, during which Speedsoft has supported the product through a mail list. They've also released three patches, fixing numerous bugs, resulting in a stable OS/2 application.

In fact, Sibyl is a clone of Borland/Inprise's Delphi, Version 2, including the user interface, language/compiler, and class libraries. If you've used Delphi, you'll find Sibyl is exactly the same, with the same strengths and weaknesses.

Sibyl's graphical installation quickly and painlessly copies the files onto your system and updates the CONFIG.SYS file for you. Patches come only as zip files, which must be unzipped over top of the existing installation. While this is not particularly attractive, it is reasonably straightforward.

One big bonus is that Sibyl comes with full source code for the runtime libraries and component classes, plus numerous sample applications. The source code is very useful for learning purposes, and having the source available helps make up for the occasional gap in Sibyl's help files.

Visual development

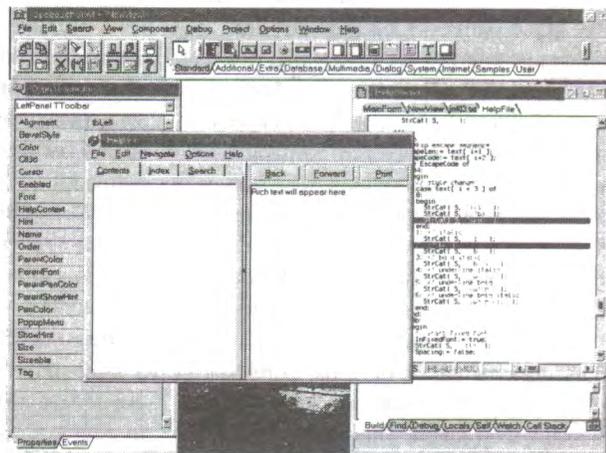
Exactly like Delphi, Sibyl lets you quickly create a user interface. The interface consists of forms—the windows or dialogs of your application—which contain buttons, list boxes, edit boxes, and the other standard OS/2 Presentation Manager controls. They also include quite a few special controls, such as a progress bar and database

controls. To create an interface, simply select controls from a categorized palette, and drop them onto your forms.

Using the Object Inspector, you can configure various properties of the controls. Most importantly, you can link the various events that the control can activate to code written in Object Pascal. Unlike traditional OS/2 PM pro-

gramming, there is very little housekeeping code to write, so it's much easier to get started writing a useful PM application.

Sibyl's full environment integrates the form editor discussed earlier with several other tools. One of them is a good code editor, with color syntax highlighting to make your code more readable, search and replace, and all the usual features. The environment also integrates project management tools, online context-sensitive help, and the Object Pascal compiler. Fortunately, there's no makefile to worry about.



Why would I use Sibyl?

If you want to write OS/2 Presentation Manager applications, from small and simple, to medium scale systems, Sibyl will provide you with an easy-to-use tool that is based on a reasonably sophisticated language and compiler. Unlike REXX-based tools, Sibyl gives you the assurance that comes from a typed object oriented language, but which is still fairly easy for beginners. The online help is good enough that no paper manual is needed. (That's just as well, since none is provided.)

Sibyl makes it particularly easy to customize and extend built-in controls, something that is very difficult or simply impossible with many tools.

If you want to create a graphics application, using Sibyl will be far easier than using OS/2 Presentation Manager calls. You may find it is limited in some features, requiring access to OS/2 API calls—but that's easily done.

Speedsoft has made every effort to keep both the language and the component class libraries compatible with Delphi. I was able to port a whole application to Delphi with minimal changes. Unfortunately, the form files (which define the layout of each form) are incompatible with Del-

Sibyl

\$150.00

Speedsoft

www.speedsoft-online.de



phi; however, an import facility can convert Delphi forms to Sibyl's format.

Real world issues

In my experience, Sibyl's support for command-line applications is problematic, but other developers have had success writing such programs. Sibyl has the usual Pascal input/output facilities. You can also write programs as "simulated" PM applications, where the normal text output goes to a window.

The Object Pascal compiler (which is also available as a command-line program) is good. However, I've found some problems with optimization and complex expressions. It lacks some things that would make Sibyl a serious industrial-strength tool, such as include files. To be fair, earlier versions of Delphi had the same limitations. For most people, the compiler will generally be sufficient.

Sibyl's database support is incomplete, and it's difficult to start using for many database systems. For example, only read-only dBase file support is provided. This is unfortunate since the bulk of the database capability is done, including various data aware controls. If you intend to use Sibyl for database applications, you'd best check carefully what support is available for the engine you pick, and be prepared to work around problems.

These problems mean that Sibyl is not going to replace any of the full C++ compilers like Visual Age, GCC, or Watcom, for heavy-duty programming tasks. And, of course, some people dislike Pascal in itself—though Object Pascal is far beyond the original Pascal syntax.

OS support

Sibyl creates standalone executable files

(EXEs) for OS/2 Warp 3 or 4, both Presentation Manager and command line. It requires no runtime DLLs; this increases the EXE size but makes applications easy to distribute.

From the same files, Sibyl can create a working application for Windows 95 or Windows NT 4. Though the Windows functionality is not officially completed, some developers have created large applications that work on both OS/2 and Windows. In addition, the development environment itself can run on either Windows or OS/2. Perhaps the most serious omission from the Windows version is online help, though this is likely to be fixed soon.

As I write this article, Speedsoft is making available an early pre-release of Sibyl for Linux. It can create Linux applications, and the IDE itself runs on Linux. This version is promised to be released early in 2000.

Obviously, once the support for Windows and Linux is finished, we will have a powerful cross-platform development tool. If you're willing to work around problems, you can even use it right now.

Getting support

Speedsoft has never offered regular one-on-one support in any form, and they do not have a telephone support number or email address. However, in the past they have been very responsive on the Sibyl mailing list, which anyone can join. I recommend this even if you just want to find out about Sibyl. A demo version is available.

But I feel I must share a major warning. For about half of 1999, Sibyl was effectively a dead product. Speedsoft decided their sales did not justify further investment. This left the OS/2 version complete but occasionally buggy, and the Windows version usable but incomplete. During this time,

Speedsoft did not respond much at all, which was frustrating.

Speedsoft has now seen the opportunity of Linux. As a side effect of porting to Linux, they decided to release further enhancements to the OS/2 and Windows versions.

At around \$150 (\$100 for upgrades or educational purchase) Sibyl represents good value, particularly for a cross platform tool.

So what's developed?

Sibyl is a great tool that makes developing serious graphical applications for OS/2 easy. Perhaps, if it had been available a few years earlier, it could have helped prevent OS/2's decline. Now, we are lucky to have such a tool, and I wish Speedsoft the best in their efforts to expand into the Linux and Windows markets.

A few significant issues prevent Sibyl from being a full professional development system like IBM Visual Age C++, but it is nevertheless very useful for corporations looking for a tool that combines the ease of visual development with a serious language. ☺

Aaron Lawrence is a software developer and consultant for Advantage Retail Solutions, who produce a Point of Sale and Back Office system for the oil industry, on OS/2 and Windows NT. Advantage used Sibyl to develop an Accounts package. Aaron also used Sibyl to develop a version control application.

New OS/2-related IBM Redbooks

by Esther Schindler

Every so often, IBM publishes "Redbooks," technical guides to IBM products or supported technologies. Generally, they're written by people who are working with the applications personally, explaining how the software or hardware works—as opposed to the way that the developers thought it was supposed to work. Most of them are very good.

Happily, the IBM training organization in Austin has continued to work very closely with the OS/2 Server and Java Business Development organizations during the fourth quarter of 1999, and a few new titles are available or expected soon.

First, IBM is creating new courses. Expect to see hands-on workshop classes on "Migrating to OS/2 Warp Server 'Aurora' for e-business," "WorkSpace On-Demand 2.0," and a newly created workshop entitled "From C/S Application to e-business Applications." These may be available outside the U.S. before we see them in the States.

A new redbook was just published, *Design Considerations: From Client/Server Applications to e-business Applications*, order number SG24-5503-00. The objective of this book is to describe process and design considerations when migrating an application from the client/server to the e-business application model. The intended audience for this book includes project managers, IT architects, systems designers, and programmers interested in e-business. This redbook is available in PDF format for downloading or

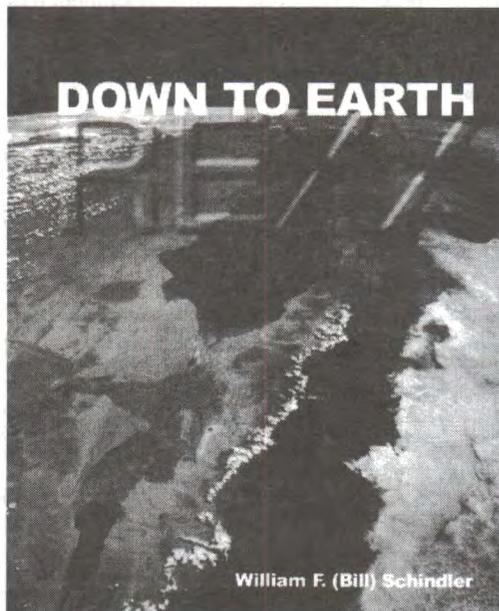
viewing online from www.redbooks.ibm.com/pubs/pdfs/redbooks/sg245503.pdf.

In late 1999, IBM published a Redbook entitled *Lotus Domino R5 on OS/2 Platform Exploring New Features and Interoperability*, order number SG24-5497-00. This redbook was designed for Domino Administrators and covers how to install new servers, how to migrate existing servers, and how to tune Domino R5 and the WebMail Client for optimal performance. This redbook is available in PDF format for downloading or viewing online from www.redbooks.ibm.com/pubs/pdfs/redbooks/sg245497.pdf.

Currently underway is a project to update a very popular redbook, *Dynamic TCP/IP: Work Your TCP/IP Internet-work with Dynamic IP*, new order number SG24-5280-01. This second edition updates the contents of the previous redbook to include OS/2 Warp Server for e-business with TCP/IP Version 4.21, Windows 98, and Windows 2000, and adds more information about dynamic IP configuration on AIX. It also takes a fresh look at dynamic IP at the protocol level. The second edition will be available in hard-copy early in the first quarter. However, you can get the PDF version of this updated book right now at www.redbooks.ibm.com/pubs/pdfs/redbooks/sg245280.pdf.

Another project was completed in fourth quarter which updated another popular redbook, *WorkSpace On-Demand Customer Scenarios*, order number, SG24-5107-01. This new version should be available in first quarter 2000. ☺

**Coming
Soon**



Internet used by more senior citizens

press release

press release

In the last two to three years, older users have experienced one of the highest rates of increase in computer ownership and Internet usage, reports *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, the Journal published by Mary Ann Liebert Inc.

Although older users still lag behind the younger generation, they have made remarkable strides in embracing the new technology. Indeed, studies now show that there is very little difference among age groups in use of Internet email. Users over 75 years of age are as likely to chat online as those under 25 years of age.

"The trend toward increasing usage of the Internet by the elderly will continue and accelerate as the baby boom generation matures," says Mark D. Wiederhold, M.D., Ph.D., F.A.C.P., Editor in Chief of *CyberPsychology & Behavior*. "What's so exciting about this development is the enormous potential that technology has to transform and enrich the lives of the elderly."

"The extent to which computers, the Internet and virtual reality applications can meet the needs of the elderly has just recently begun to receive the attention it

deserves," says Albert A. ("Skip") Rizzo, Ph.D., University of Southern California and guest editor of this special issue of the Journal.

"How can technology be used to enable successful aging? One very important area is in developing and connecting communities of interest that help people stay engaged in life, which is one of the keys to successful aging," says Horace B. Deets, Executive Director of the AARP, in an introduction to the special issue.

Papers in the issue cover a range of aging/information technology topics including societal trends, usage statistics, education, social interaction, information acquisition, interface issues, user-centered development, and virtual reality approaches for the study of aging and for functional assessment/rehabilitation concerns.

Mary Ann Liebert Inc. publishes over 60 Journals, books, newsletters, trade publications and directories in the biomedical, biotechnology and other fields. For a copy of the issue or to find out more information, visit on the Web at www.liebertpub.com or www.liebertonline.com.

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New and improved

compiled by Esther Schindler

In my more cynical moments, I often wonder why OS/2 has so many utilities of certain kinds—file managers and ftp clients, for instance—and so few entries in other categories. What about an application to create Web-based surveys? Why not a flow chart program? How about a lightweight competitor to the Goldmine contact manager? If any wannabee programmers are looking for a good project, I have plenty of such suggestions.

At any rate, this month we have new releases of a few old favorites, including PMView and PM2You—as well as a few more Internet and system utilities. If you'd like to write a review of any of these programs, write to the reviews editor (at reviews@possi.org).

PMView 2000

The long-anticipated update of PMView has been released. The new version, now known as PMView 2000, is a viewing and editing tool for bitmapped graphics.

PMView's slideshow feature lets you create slideshows by dragging and dropping files. A wide variety of file formats are supported, including GIF, TIFF, PhotoCD PRO, and JPEG.

PMView's automatic thumbnailing facility creates miniature versions of your images for on-screen viewing in the file open dialog, which means that you'll never again have to load a bunch of images just because you forgot the name of the one you were looking for.

Unique file handling features include transparent UU- and XX-decoding, MIME decoding, and file recovery. If PMView cannot recognize a file's format, it will try to find a known format inside the file. This lets you read JPEG or GIF files with unknown headers, which some other programs refuse to recognize. Such files frequently appear on the Internet.

On systems with palette manager, PMView 2000 provides color animation, and its color optimizing functions ensure that you always get good looking images with the best colors possible.

Upgrades are free for registered users. PMView costs \$49 for either the OS/2 or Windows version, or \$79 for both versions. For details see www.pmview.com.

NeoComm Vector for OS/2

NeoComm released NeoComm Vector for OS/2 and Windows, a solution that takes advantage of IP multicast to transfer large volumes of data to a theoretically unlimited number of clients while using minimal bandwidth.

NeoComm Vector is a file transfer utility that uses multicast technology in a one-to-many basis. The company's own tests showed bandwidth savings up to 70%, compared to conventional ftp.

NeoComm Vector is available for OS/2 Warp (Version 4 and WSeB) as both a server and client platform and as a client for Windows 9x/NT. It costs \$499.96.

More information can be found at www.neocomm.com.

INI tools

INI tools 1.10 is a freeware INI editor. It works on binary OS/2 INI and plain-text Windows INI files, with integrated tools to compare INI files and search multiple files for a string.

INI Tools lets you save OS/2 INI files as Windows INI files and vice versa. You can use an INI file as a template for a Rexx script, compare files and write the result to INI, and find (and replace) strings in INI files. Documentation is provided in INF format.

INI tools 1.10, is at http://Goran_Ivankovic.tripod.com.

Distributed.net client/proxy for OS/2

distributed.net believes in the capability and potential of distributed computing. Their mission consists of three interdependent goals: development, deployment, and advocacy, to be pursued in the advancement of distributed computing. They're working to develop open, easily portable, highly adaptable, best-of-breed software, as well as networks and other necessary infrastructure to support that software.

Some of the projects, including RC5, DES, and CSC, involve cryptography. These are contests sponsored by legitimate and respected organizations. They are trying to decrypt encoded phrases which have been released to the public specifically to test and evaluate the strength of the encryption algorithm used.

Trevor Hemsley (Trevor-Hemsley@dia1.pipex.com) released a new version of the Distributed.net client and proxy server for OS/2. You can find the client version at <http://http.distributed.net/pub/dcti/current-client/dnetc-os2-x86.zip>, and the proxy at <http://http.distributed.net/pub/dcti/proxyper-rc5des/proxyper311-os2-x86.zip>.

PM2You

Ridax programutveckling released PM2You 4.1, which allows you to "remote control" one PC's OS/2 desktop from another OS/2 or Windows system, or using an ordi-

nary Web browser with Java support. PM2You can communicate over many different links, including dial-up modem and TCP/IP. In this version, a Windows host is also available, called WIN2You.

PM2You is 2000 SEK (Swedish Krona), which is about \$235 US. For more information and a demo version, go to <http://ridax.nu> or email mail@ridax.se.

PillarSoft Suite

The PillarSoft Suite is a collection of OS/2 software and utilities. The suite includes an archiver, two text editors, a secure deletion program, a paint program, an easy to use desktop backup program, and more.

There are 12 separate programs in the PillarSoft Suite. They include Data Shield, for secure data deletion, DeskTop Backup, with point and click desktop backups, and a pair of productivity text editors. You'll also find a color selection utility, a process killer, an extensible code template tool, and PSC—a status center providing a plethora of information. PillarSoft's SFX Installer enables you to build custom installations, and ShowTime/2 is a background changer and slideshow viewer. The suite also includes a video player, a "pixel paint" program, and WarpZip, a file archiving tool for OS/2.

Although several of these programs are available separately, a few are included only in the PillarSoft Suite.

PillarSoft Suite licenses are available at BMT Micro for \$129, though there's a "special price" of \$99 for an undisclosed period of time. More information and downloads are available at www.pillarsoft.net.

ADRp

ADRp 1.70 claims to be the world's fastest OS/2 Warp address manager. This \$25 shareware text application includes dialing (for modems or ISDN), calendar, birthday reminder, and lots of export filters. It's available in German and English, for both OS/2 and Windows 9x/NT.

You should be able to find it at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/pim/adrp170.zip>.

BBBS 4.0 MP

Some of us "old timers" still like BBSes. If you're one of them, you may appreciate that BBBS 4.0 is available at www.bbbs.net. It's a Y2K compliant system, supported by authors and Internet ready. Prices start at \$60 for noncommercial use.

Goose, Jasmine, and Gismo

Pretty Pop Software has updated three applications: Goose 1.01, Jasmine 2.86 and Gismo 2.14.

Goose 1.01 is a "Checking Updated Homepage" utility.

Jasmine 2.86 is an ftp front-end to the OS/2 Warp ftp functionality. It's meant to

enhance the maintenance of your Web pages.

Gismo 2.14 is a unique color coordinating utility for those who uses editors to make HTML documents with color RGB codes. Gismo lets you copy the RGB codes you want to the Clipboard, and paste them into the appropriate form in your HTML documents, using your favorite text editor or HTML editor.

Find all of these at <http://pretty-pop.tsx.org>.

QuoteGrabber goes free

QuoteGrabber, available in a beta release, is a stock market quote tracking Java application that works with several stock quote providers, including Yahoo and Datek. It runs under OS/2's Java and includes a foreign exchange module and a portfolio management.

The QuoteGrabber is now free software, released under the GPLv2. You can freely copy and distribute it, but if you change it and wish to distribute the resulting software, you must make the modified sources available to the community under the same license. Separate commercial license agreements which don't carry this source code clause are still possible.

The full source code for the QuoteGrabber is available. From now on, QG development will be organized on the quotegrabber-dev@apartia.ch mailing list. A



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new release of the QG is available at www.aparima.com/quote/download.html.

cdplayer for WarpCenter

cdplayer 1.4 for WarpCenter is a little CD player that lives in a WarpCenter tray and displays disk info in the OS/2 tasklist. It's emailware.

cdplayer requires OS/2 Warp 4 with WarpCenter, REXX and MMPM.

This version runs Object Rexx as well as Classic Rexx. It also has user interface enhancements, such as a power button to start and stop the player. You can find the current version at <http://www.SubSys.de>.

Object Desktop: Fixkit 2

Stardock released Fixkit #2 for Object Desktop 2.0. According to the company, this update addresses a number of minor bugs reported by customers over the past year.

Object Desktop is a desktop environment designed to take advantage of the power of OS/2's Workplace Shell. You can find the update at www.stardock.com.

DirMaster: now open source

DirMaster is a file manager inspired by the Amiga's Directory Opus and Symantec's Norton Commander. First released in 1993, work on DirMaster ceased in 1995. On December 31, the author released a Y2K compliant version to ensure that DirMaster users could keep using the software.

The author is also planning to open the source, either through the GPL or some other license. If you're interested in taking over maintenance and coordination of updates, contact Alexander Wilkens at Enriva Development, www.enriva.com.

Desktop Clock

Desktop Clock 1.0 is a freeware, configurable clock for your Desktop. Desktop Clock lets you configure date and time display and add a message to the display. When started, Desktop clock becomes (and

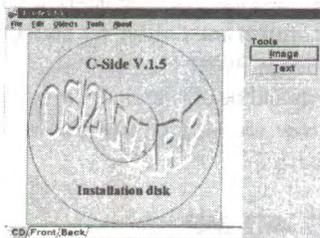
remains) the bottom window, behind all other windows on your Desktop.

Source code is included. To download the software, visit http://Goran_Ivankovic.tripod.com.

C-Side

C-Side is a native OS/2 WYSIWYG CD-cover and label editor, capable of color text and graphics design.

Version 2 of C-Side is now online at



<http://inet.uni2.dk/~kimfoder/C-SIDE.HTM>. It's shareware, and costs \$35.

WarpIN

WarpIN, currently at version 0.9.0, is intended to become a universal OS/2 installer. It has full system configuration (CONFIG.SYS, WPS classes, WPS objects), and user exits, and can undo any changes to your system.

The new version, available from www2.rz.hu-berlin.de/~h0444vnd/os2.htm, is still a developer's release and is not stable yet. However, many improvements have been made.

WarpIN is a Netlabs project. The source code is available on the Netlabs CVS archive. See www.netlabs.org/nosa for details. Even though WarpIN is released under the GNU General Public License (GPL), it can also be used for packaging commercial software.

Keyboard Layer

Keyboard Layer/2 2.0 is an alternative keyboard layout switcher for OS/2 version 4.0. It can also be used as a current layout indicator. Find it at [\[man/software/english/layer.html\]\(http://man/software/english/layer.html\). As far as I can tell, it's free.](http://os2.dhs.org/~glass-</p></div><div data-bbox=)

New PM ICQ client

ICQ ("I Seek You") is a free Internet service that lets you find friends and associates online in real time. You can create a Contact List containing only people you want to have there, you can send them messages, chat with them, send files, configure ICQ to work with external applications and more. For information about ICQ in general, see www.icq.com.

A new OS/2 ICQ client, pwICQ, by Perry Werneck, was just released. It supports some REXX scripts, sounds, and "away" messages.

Find his second alpha (0.27) on Hobbes, at <http://hobbes.nmsu.edu/pub/os2/apps/internet/chat/pwicq027.zip>.

New PGCC vers. 2.95.3

Gnu's GCC is the free C compiler available for many platforms. The Pentium GCC compiler for OS/2, version 2.95.3, is available at www.goof.com/pcg/os2/index.html.

SysPage/2

I can't resist looking at software from a company that introduces itself saying, "Sorry Bis-cuit Software originated with the realization that the author's favorite PC squeeze, OS/2, was going—going—gone. Clinging to the atavistic, he determined that only software written in a dead language could do appropriate justice to the moribund system. And so we have the unexciting and nerdo prospect of Modula-2 servicing OS/2."

SysPage/2 is an OS/2 system monitor. Highly configurable, it displays system status values in HTML format. Those with OS/2 Warp Server environments may find it especially useful, because you can retrieve a system's information remotely. For more information, see www.dimension1.com/~ser1s/sorbis.html. ☺



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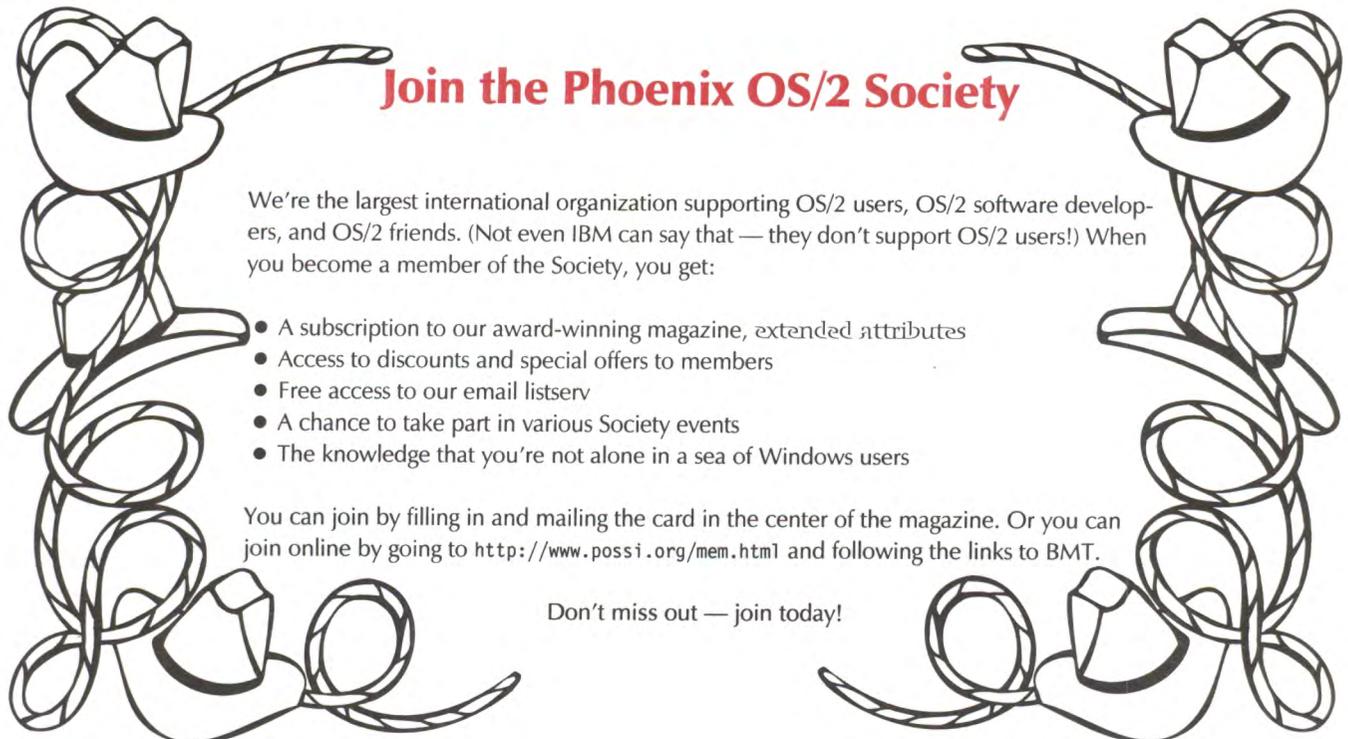
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